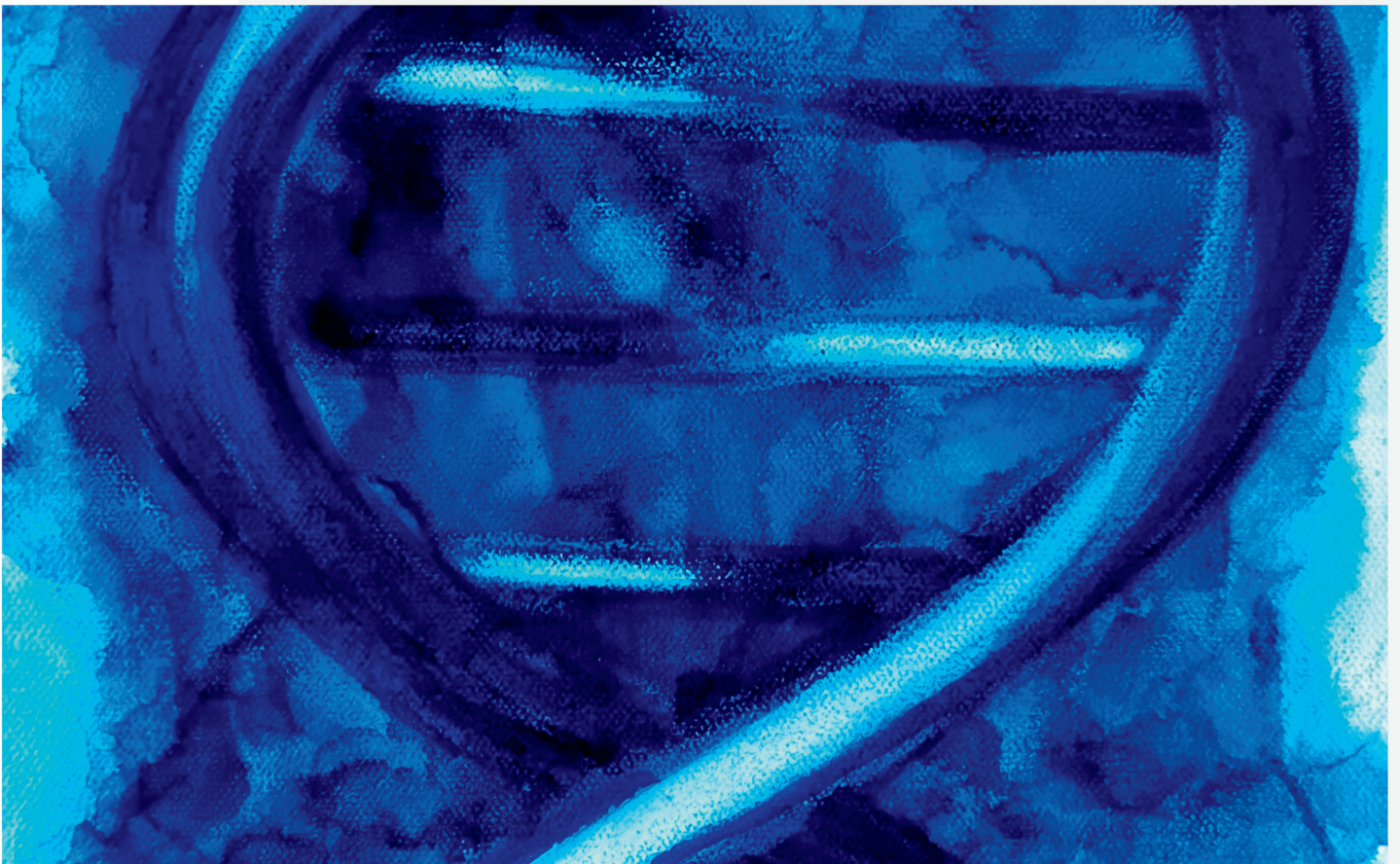




Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling
Conseil Canadien de Conseil Génétique

A 25 YEAR HISTORY OF CANADIAN CERTIFICATION



PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

THE CBGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WWW.CBGC-CCCG.CA
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ABOUT CBGC



The Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling (CBGC) is committed to ensuring that members of the Canadian public are receiving genetic counselling services from health care professionals with a standard level of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgement. Genetic counsellors granted the credential CCGC (Canadian Certified Genetic Counsellor) and/or its French equivalent CGAC (Conseiller(ère) en génétique agréé(e) du Canada), have demonstrated these standard knowledge and practice competencies.

The year 2023 is a landmark year for CBGC, marking the **25th anniversary** of the Canadian Genetic Counselling Certification process. CBGC is proud to have one of the longest standing genetic counselling certification systems in the world!

With genomics playing an ever-increasing role in health care of Canadians, CBGC's mission has never been more important:

To protect the public by setting and maintaining certification standards and to promote the value of Canadian board certified genetic counsellors for quality health care delivery.



UNIQUELY CANADIAN

CANADIAN CERTIFICATION REFLECTS
THE CANADIAN CONTEXT OF GENETICS
IN HEALTH CARE.

Recognizing the importance of an independent certification board, the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC) mandated the creation of an independent Canadian Certification body to oversee national certification of genetic counsellors. The Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling-Conseil Canadien de Conseil Génétique (CBGC-CCCG) was incorporated on July 12, 2019.

The three major activities of CBGC are administering the certification exam, reviewing recertification applications and assigning continuing education credits to educational events. For more information on these activities, visit the CBGC website: <https://www.cbgc-cccg.ca/>

The CBGC is also actively engaged in reviewing and updating Canadian core competency documents upon which the certification exam is based.

THE ORIGINS

In the early 1990's the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors was finally taking shape and there was a core group of committed counsellors who kept moving the association forward. The next step was to form a Certification Board within the CAGC and create a national credentialing exam for the purpose of Canadian Certification. There were eight members of that first board from different parts of Canada, and a variety of backgrounds and professional experiences prior to actively working as genetic counsellors in Canada.

These intrepid volunteers started by looking at what other similar health professional groups had done and how they had accomplished Canadian certification. They also looked outside the country to see what others had done.

They learned the fundamentals of exam preparation, question writing, question validation, exam validation, as well as the intricacies of certification examinations metrics. This first certification board dedicated tremendous energy and time to accomplish the goal of certification in Canada- all of which happened 25 years ago when it was not as easy to communicate as it is today (no zoom meetings!).

THE FIRST NATIONAL CERTIFICATION EXAM IN BANFF, ALBERTA-1998



After a four-year long process of diligent preparation, the time came for the first exam administration. It was the Fall of 1998 and Canadian GC certification was the culmination of a move toward more consolidation of the knowledge and scope of practice of genetic counsellors. There were 49 exam writers for the inaugural exam. Today, there are currently 372 Canadian Certified Genetic Counsellors.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CANADIAN CERTIFICATION PROCESS

A DEDICATED TEAM OF 8 VOLUNTEERS BUILT THE FIRST EXAM



GABRIELLE METTLER

CHEO HOSPITAL, OTTAWA
FIRST CANADIAN CERTIFICATION
BOARD

GRADUATED: SARAH LAWRENCE, 1998



**MARY CONNOLLY-
WILSON**

CHAIRPERSON OF THE FIRST
CAGC CERTIFICATION
BOARD 1994-1998

"As a genetic counsellor and member of the very first Certification Board, certification represented to me (1) an opportunity to level the playing field for those practicing as genetic counsellors given the broad range of educational backgrounds and professional experience, (2) a strategy to ensure quality of practice, (3) a profession-defining requirement and (4) the first step in an evolution towards licensure and possibly independent practice. Having now been an administrator and "hiring manager" since 2003, certification represents an assurance of standards being met."
Gabrielle Mettler

"At the end of it all though we had pride in the accomplishment of having a new national standard, a certification process for all Genetic Counsellors in Canada. Although the road was long with many bends and turns we did navigate it to the end and we left a legacy for others. I would like to commend and congratulate all those individuals who have followed us on this first road and helped to build on the initial process. Those who have served on certification boards through the years have had their work cut out for them and without these individuals we would not be where we are today."
Mary Connolly-Wilson

THE FIRST CANADIAN CERTIFIED GENETIC COUNSELLORS

THEY BECAME CERTIFIED 25 YEARS AGO- BEFORE THE HUMAN GENOME PROJECT! WE ASKED SEVERAL OF THEM WHAT DID IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A GENETIC COUNSELLOR THEN? WHAT ABOUT NOW?



DAVID KOEHN
GRADUATED: MCGILL, 1989



KAREN PANABAKER
GRADUATED: MCGILL, 1992

"I have seen many changes in my career from having no internet and not knowing where any genes were located to having access to many resources on my computer and being involved in arranging and interpreting Whole exome sequencing of 20,000 genes. I have seen a major increase in the number of diagnoses we can now make in Medical Genetics (2% to 40%), including the ability to now provide a diagnosis and information to families seen 20 years ago who are re-referred for assessment."

David Koehn

"I have been a cancer genetic counsellor for almost 29 years, and have witnessed substantial changes in practice over time, both in how we provide genetic counselling and genetic testing and the molecular technology used. I can honestly say there has never been a dull moment, and I feel so incredibly lucky to say that I truly love what I do."

Karen Panabaker

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION CREDENTIAL IS AN IMPORTANT BASIS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF PROFESSIONAL LEGISLATION AND REGULATION IN CANADA.

The genetic counselling profession is currently unregulated in Canada and, as such, practitioners are not governed by provincial and territorial legislation, which ensure safe, competent, and ethical practice in the interest of public protection.

The CBGC considers professional regulation by the various provinces as a key goal for the Canadian genetic counselling community and our patients.

National certification demonstrates competence of the genetic counsellor and a high level of commitment to the practice of genetic counselling in Canada.

The CBGC is working towards the following goals:

- Consider moving the next exam to February 2025 (in lieu of August 2024) to see if this improves the interest for the CBGC exam among Canadian genetic counsellors
- Collaborate closely with the CAGC and individual provincial associations to support regulations efforts
- Create a pathway for ABGC diplomates from ACGC-accredited programs to apply for CBGC recognition and/or credential verification for professional regulation or licensure efforts
- Improve communication with CBGC diplomates, Canadian and ACGC accredited genetic counselling training programs, and new genetic counselling graduates outlining the benefits of Canadian certification

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WITH GRATITUDE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CANADIAN CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE:

MARY CONNOLLY-WILSON (CHAIR), ANDREA SHUGAR (PRESIDENT), GABRIELLE METTLER, LOLA CARTIER, STEPHANIE KIEFFER, NATHALIE MCINTOSH, ANNE NEIDHART, AND HEATHER STALKER

IN FEBRUARY, 2023, CBGC CONTACTED CURRENTLY ACTIVE DIPLOMATES WHO WERE PART OF THE FIRST EXAMINATION COMMITTEE OR WHO HAD WRITTEN THE FIRST EXAM THE FIRST EXAM. SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR SHARING THEIR PERSPECTIVES: LOLA CARTIER, MARY CONNOLLY-WILSON, KIMBERLY DORNAN, CLARE GIBBONS, CATHY GILPIN, STACY HEWSON, DAVID KOEHN, GABRIELLE METTLER, KAREN PANABAKER, NADIA QUERCIA AND LINDA MACLAREN .

COVER ARTWORK BY HANA SROKA, MSC, CCGC, CGC

ARTWORK ON PAGE 2: "SENTINEL PASS, BANFF NATIONAL PARK" BY STEFANSERENA (CCO 1.0).

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ADDITIONAL SOURCES: CAGC ARCHIVES:
WWW.CAGC-ACCG.CA

